

A comparison between the weights of influence on both factors

In one of the first chapters of the study entitled “Environmental influences during development and their later consequences for health and disease: implications for the interpretation of empirical studies” Gluckman (2004) quoted that “the early phase of life is characterized by the presence of external stimuli”. Judging from this quotation, there is a clear difference in the definition of both inherited influences and environmental influences on the development of the human as a person.

Judging from the term itself, inherited influences are factors that are attributed to genetics, giving children a sort of “pre-programmed” nature, allowing them to respond to certain stimuli. Some internal factors that are inherent to children are the actions of crying, smiling, chewing, sneezing and stretching. These are actions that the child can already do without any instruction from others or by disruption from the environment. Inherited influences are already developed subconsciously, unlike environmental influences which are gathered outside of the womb.

Now environmental influences are factors that come to a child from the outside; meaning that there are other factors that are involved other than the nature of the person. Some of these factors include teaching, learning and acquisition of knowledge from parents, teachers and other persons that are outside of the child’s intrinsic nature. Environmental influences, unlike inherited influences need to be acquired before they can be of use to a person. Lessons about the worldly events and experiences that border on the outside world are some factors that can be considered as external or environmental influences.

External and internal influences to human growth and development exist with each other. Simply put, an internal influence can either be enhanced or cut by an environmental influence. Natural or inherited abilities like inclination to music, or to dance are inherited traits that can be enhanced or can be brought down by environmental influences like encouragement to sing by giving a child voice lessons or teasing a child because of his ability to dance, causing him to lose confidence in himself, elucidating the role that the environment plays in development.

Subsequently, environmental influences can also be markers for the development of diseases in humans, which can alter growth patterns. Rice (2004) says that “the link between prenatal environment and offspring outcomes can be different because of the relationship between the mother and the baby, making proper diagnostic tests a must for normal baby delivery. Pregnant mothers that are using drugs or are smoking can alter the genome make-up of the child, pre-disposing the child to environmental factors that may contribute to his general state of health. Negative influences during pregnancy and lactation, like smoking, alcoholism and other vices can greatly deter the capacity of a child and predispose him to diseases and ailments like diabetes, hypertension, congenital defects and many others.

Conflicts arise between both internal and external influences on human development, where many psychologists argue on which kind of influence weighs more. Chomsky (1965) believes that there is a universal grammar that applies to all human languages and is pre-specified, making the acquisition of linguistic skills an internal influence to language development. But, some psychologists also believe in the behaviorist approach that Skinner (1957) imparted, where language can be acquired by general learning methods like perceptive learning.

In the instance of development in children, external factors can either become a positive or detrimental factor for improvement of a child's well-being. Lessons taught, happiness and good experiences causes the internal influences of a child to increase in terms of performing capacity and dealing with presented situations. The same also goes to negative experiences and experiences, where a child may become introverted because of traumatizing experiences.

The growth and development of humans can contribute vastly to the capacity of a person to perform in the future. In order for internal influences to be brought out, there must be a good environmental influence in order to enhance the internal factors in a person.